

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Wyoming Board of Agriculture Minutes
February 9-10, 2005
WDA Conference Room, Cheyenne, WY

Members Present: Helen Jones, Vice President
Reed Gardner
Arlene Brown
Spencer Ellis
Lee Otto
Meghan Lally
John Etchepare, Director, WY Dept. of Agriculture
Frank Galey, Dean, UW College of Agriculture

Youth Leadership Advisory: Leif Udem
David Largent

Members Absent: Alan Todd, President
Emily Horton
Ryan Ells
Ryan Lance, Governor Freudenthal's Office

WDA Staff Present: Jim Schwartz, Deputy Director
Muff Parker, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Jones 1:15 p.m. on February 9, 2005.

Approval of Minutes

Ellis made a motion to approve the November 4, December 7, December, 22, 2004, and January 5, 2005 minutes. Seconded by Otto. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Conservation District Appointment/Water Quality Grant

Gardner made a motion to approve the appointment of Ted Zier to fill the position vacated by Richard Russell to the South Big Horn Conservation District be approved. Seconded by Ellis. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Brown moved to accept the revised budget presented by the Star Valley Conservation District and to go forward with funding of the water quality grant. Seconded by Gardner. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Special Districts

Bobbie Frank handed out a list of the conservation districts who are out of compliance with the Department of Revenue. This report show the districts who have not complied with the request by the Department of Revenue in regards to their request for districts to

submit the legal description, a map of the district and a resolution. All districts were required to submit the information to Revenue by January 1, 2005. The Board felt they should go back to their districts and visit with constituents.

Beef Council Check-off Refund Bill

Brown moved to support the refund program without the opt-out option for the bill before the legislature. Seconded by Gardner. All voted in favor. Motion carried. The President asked Jim Schwartz to write a letter to Ann Wittmann to let her know of the Board's position.

Drought

Grant Stumbough reported to the southern tier and the central portions have had above normal precipitation and the northern part is still in trouble. The record highs we've had lately are going to move the snow runoff earlier than normal this year. The livestock board is attributing the loss of a million head of cattle attributed to the drought. Grant is hoping the new Secretary of Agriculture is sympathetic to drought. WDA has been working with the Congressional Delegation in the passing the tax deferment bill from 1 year to three years. Along with other partners, there are currently 19 soil moisture sensor sites throughout the state. Their purpose is predict soil production.

Senator Thomas

Senator Thomas called in and discussed the situation with the Canadian border. He recently met with the new Secretary of Agriculture which he felt went very well. The Secretary spent most of the time discussing the science of mad cow disease and not too much on how they planned on handling the March 7 opening of the border. Along with Conrad Burns, himself and others, they have put a bill together which would indicate there had to be some changes before the border is opened. They are also looking at the possibility of congress overriding the regulation and the regulation would then have to be presented to Congress again. Gardner asked why the movement of the packing plants from the US to Canada is happening so fast. The Senator indicated he wasn't sure and until the public hearing, most of them weren't of it. Jones wanted to know if Wyoming producers could do to help the process. Senator Thomas said it would be helpful to contact the ag groups in surrounding states, urging them to support Congress' doing something different than what is being proposed in terms of the regulation. He said he would have his office send the contact numbers and addresses. Bryce Reece asked if the Secretary gave them any indication as to how far away we are with Japan. Senator Thomas didn't indicate he said anything. He's aware of some meetings with the Ambassador and the Secretary of State did meet with them. He feels there is some reluctance in trying to use one country to lean on the other. They want to meet with each of them separately. Otto explained the board oppose the feeding of chicken litter to cattle because of the ruminant products. Shortly after that the USDA came out with a regulation saying that practice would cease. He wanted to know if the Senator had any thoughts on an article in the Wyoming Tribune which said this practice is still being done. Thomas knows nothing about it. He said they would check in to it and get the answer to the Department. He then read an article just brought in that said the Japanese government panel of science and officials from the Ag and health ministries said they lifted verifying

the age of cattle which could end Japan's import on US beef. Discussion of the issue continued by the Board. Senator Thomas' office called and said they received word that the March 7 date has been delayed because the investigation is not complete.

Legislative Update

Each of the Executives of the ag groups discussed each of the related bills. The Conservation District Bill did not pass, but the majority of the others are progressing well.

Drought (cont.)

Grant continued by explaining the value of the soil moisture monitors. Wyoming will now have scientific data to base better management decisions. The Department is working with the Water Development Commission on a portion of a bill currently with the legislature which allows eight million dollars for studies over the next five years.

Non fat dry milk

The Department has been talking with USDA about making Johnson and Sheridan counties eligible for the program, but they refuse because they did not receive the D4 status by the deadline. They have refused mediation and we are now going through the formal appeals process.

Introductions of new Department Employees and presentations to outgoing members

Grant introduced Dani Sullivan and Justin Williams and John introduced Karen Everett. Mary Randolph presented gifts to Reed Gardner from USDA/NRCS for his dedication of 26 years to the RC &D Council. John presented Arlene Brown, Reed Gardner and Meghan Lally with clock plaques for their service to the State and the Department. Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Jones at 9:25 a.m. on February 10, 2005.

State Lands Programs

Fred Pannell was introduced and explained the Beginning Ag Producer Loan program to the Board. This loan has a 600,000 cap, the borrower must be a Wyoming resident, the land must be in Wyoming, and the loan is up to 70% of the appraised value. Their term is for 30 years, with the interest rate for the first 10 years based on a bond from 4 - 4 1/2%. At the end of 10 years it automatically goes to 8%. The borrower must never have owned more than 160 acres of irrigated land, 320 acres of dryland, or 640 acres of grassland. He said at the present time they have received 18 application with 12 being approved and closed. The Livestock Replacement Program is ready when the Governor declares the drought to be over. He wasn't certain if the Governor can declare it over by county or the declaration has to be statewide. The program is funded for 50 million and each producer can borrow up to 250,000 to replace breeding stock and is secured by a first or second mortgage. The rate for the life of the loan will be based on the average rate of the State Treasurer's rate which is currently about 3.50% for a seven-year term. This is all based

on the number of cattle owned for three years before the drought. He also visited about the purchase of state land.

Conservation District Bonding Rules

Dani Sullivan presented some background to the Board on the need to promulgated rules for Conservation District bonding. She said in November it had come to the Department's attention that some districts were not adequately bonded. These rules are need to ensure they are bonded properly in the future.

Brown moved to start the rule making process. Otto seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Livestock Board Update

Walt Cook, Assistant State Veterinarian and Lee Romsa, Brand Inspector visited with the Board on the NAISS grant project's time lines. This grant is for a pilot project on premise ID. The pilot projects will be fully operational by July 31, 2005. Animal/premise ID is currently voluntary, but could be mandatory by 2009.

Designated List

Slade Franklin, Weed & Pest Coordinator explained the difference between designated and declared weeds and pests. The Designated list represents the entire state and the Declared list is specific to each county. He asked for the Boards approval of the Declared List which had been approved by the Wyoming Weed & Pest Council. **Gardner moved to approve the Declared List as presented. Ellis seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Wyoming Business Council Update

Cindy Garretson-Weibel told the Board the Agribusiness Division of the WBC now has John Hahn on staff as the new organic/natural person, with a focus on livestock marketing. She was very excited about a possible new position in place by summer. This is all in conjunction with the Cooperative Extension and NRCS. This position would be geared toward ag diversification. The current L.E.A.D. class is graduating in April and they will be looking for new applicants soon.

Seed Lab Rules

Hank review the rules process with the Board and explained they needed to adopt the final rules today. **Ellis moved to adopt the rules pertaining to the pricing of seed analysis by the Wyoming state seed laboratory and the creation of a seed lab advisory group. Seconded by Gardner. All voted in favor. Motion carried.** Gil Waibel gave the Board his annual report. He said the lab is processing bean faster and this allows the growers to receive their money faster. He is also wanting to add a room to the lab just for bean sampling. John asked Gil to get the cost estimates, etc. to him so he could put the request in the Department budget which is due by July 1. As a part of the new rule, a seed lab advisory group (SLAG) steering committee needs to be appointed. **Brown moved to appoint Ken Borchert as President, Tim Anderson, as Vice**

President, Mike Moore, Roy Reichenbach and Gil Waibel to serve on the SLAG steering committee.

Youth Board Updates

David Largent said being a part of the current L.E.A.D. class has been a very good experience. He said that while visiting with some of the young people in FFA and 4-H at lunch about their issues, they are very concerned about the graduated driver license bill before the legislature. He was wondering if the Board could go on record of not supporting this bill.

Board Updates

Arlene talked to the Fremont Cattlewomen in December and in January attended the Hay and Forage Expo in Casper. Dr. Galey said the College of Agriculture currently has its largest enrollment of 844 students and leads the university in research dollars at 12.4 million dollars.

FFA and 4-H Update

Several students joined the Board to discuss their programs and to talk about the impact the graduated driver's license bill would have on them as rural students.

John asked the Board to consider having a member of FFA and 4-H to be on the State Fair Advisory Board. The Board agreed to have some sample questions to the Department by March 1. The questions are for the public opinion survey about people's attitude toward agriculture.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Jones, Vice President

Date